

**REMARKS**

Claims 15, 16 and 18-27 are pending in the application and stand rejected in view of a number of objections due to informalities, 35 U.S.C. 112 rejections, and 35 U.S.C. 101 rejections. Applicant thanks the Examiner for the indication of allowability pending resolution of these objections and rejections, and submits that the present reply endeavors to resolve each and every one of these objections and rejections.

Specifically, with regards to the informalities noted by the Examiner, the claims are amended herein to address each objections as suggested by the Examiner. With regard to claims 21 and 23, Applicant submits that the noted language is not optional or suggested, as characterized by the Examiner – the test for determining the provenance of a set is executed every single time, and the language objected to by the Examiner merely specifies when the test results in a positive result, namely if all the identifiers of the group of identifiers associated with said other set are contained in the group of identifiers associated with said one set. To make this cleared, claims 21 and 23 have been amended to specify that the set is determined as being derived from said other set when all the identifiers of the group of identifiers associated with said other set are contained in the group of identifiers associated with said one set.

With respect to the 112 rejections, claim 15 has been amended to delete the term “supplied as data to the apparatus” to eliminate the perceived indefinites as to the order of the processes; Applicant notes that this term is not in fact recited by claim 27. As for the request for further clarification that “the value of a predetermined one of the items-to-be-merged,” Applicant respectfully submits that – especially in view of the deletion of the term “predetermined” – it is beyond doubt that the value of the merged item can be either the end value or the other attribute set – this limitation is not intended to be restricted to a specific one of the first or second attribute sets. Claim 18 has been amended to recite the “resulting merged set” to be clearer and also consistent with claim 20. Similarly, claim 21 has been amended to specify that the one said set is produced by the merge operation, and claim 22 to specify that a group of one or more identifiers is associated with each of said first and second sets. Finally, claim 24 has been amended to recite at least one other set, to therefore distinguish from the further set recited in claim 15.

With regards to the Examiner's objection under 35 U.S.C. 101 that the claims are directed to non-statutory subject matter because they do not produce a tangible result displayed on a device, Applicant is compelled to respectfully disagree. As explained in the specification, the invention is directed to manipulating data descriptions in the form of sets of attributes, such as those used by SQL, XML, and other such well-known data description ("mark-up") languages. Applicant submits that there can be no argument set forth that the manipulation of such data to generate other data is a concrete, useful and tangible result – such data manipulation drives the economic engine of the civilized world and takes place millions of times each day, in everything from financial transactions to engineering design to economic decision making. Applicant thus respectfully submits that the results of the presently-claimed methods are no less tangible regardless of whether they are displayed or not. In an effort to make the nature of these results clearer, claims 15 and 27 have been amended to specify that they generate a new attribute set.

In view of all of the above, Applicant submits that the application is now in condition for allowance. Should any issues remain unresolved by the present amendments, the Examiner is urged to contact the undersigned attorney.

The Commissioner is authorized to charge any additional fees which may be required or credit overpayment to deposit account no. 08-2025. In particular, if this response is not timely filed, the Commissioner is authorized to treat this response as including a petition to extend the time period pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) requesting an extension of time of the number of months necessary to make this response timely filed and the petition fee due in connection therewith may be charged to deposit account no. 08-2025.

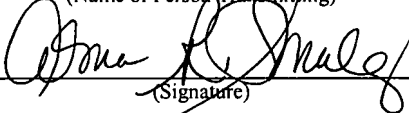
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(Date of Transmission)

Alma Smalling

(Name of Person Transmitting)

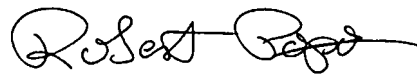


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4/23/07

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Respectfully submitted,



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